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Letter dated 21 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Spain has the honour to transmit the summary of the founding meeting of the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network, held on 23 September 2016 and chaired by the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (see annex I), and the joint communiqué adopted at that meeting (see annex II).

This initiative was announced as one of the national commitments that Spain undertook in relation to the women and peace and security agenda, as announced at the high-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which took place in October 2015.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Roman **Oyarzun**
Permanent Representative

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Annex I to the letter dated 21 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Founding meeting of the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network (23 September 2016, at United Nations Headquarters)

Summary note

On 23 September 2016, the founding meeting of the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network was held at the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The meeting was organized by Spain with the co-sponsorship of Canada, Chile, Japan, Namibia and the United Arab Emirates.

The creation of the Network stems from the recognition that Member States and regional organizations remain the most influential actors in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, as underlined in the global study for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). They are the ones with the primary responsibility to ensure that global commitments and obligations are integrated into domestic policies and legislations.

The aim of establishing the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network is to strengthen the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda at the origin of the decision-making process, by assisting Member States and regional organizations through the exchange of best practices, as well as by improving the coordination of funding and assistance programmes.

The Network will meet once a year in one of its Member States, and there will be a follow-up meeting in New York at the margins of the annual debate of the Security Council on women and peace and security. An update on the Network's secretariat and on forthcoming meetings will be given in the near future.

The founding meeting began with a ministerial segment, with the participation of 18 ministers and vice-ministers of the founding countries, the European Union Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, as well as with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and an Assistant Secretary-General for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The ministerial segment was followed by a technical discussion among the already-designated national and regional focal points, as well as civil society representatives.

At the end of the meeting a joint communiqué, signed by 41 Member States and three regional organizations, was adopted.

The following are some of the points raised during the founding meeting:

1. There is a need to strengthen the relation between the women and peace and security agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

as they mutually reinforce each other, particularly in relation to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16. Special attention should be paid to the coordination of assistance programmes.

2. The key role played by civil society in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda obligations and commitments was underlined. As they are often the ones working in the field and at the local level, they have the ability to better identify the arising challenges and problems, as well as to measure the real impact of the measures taken. Thus, it is important to "localize" the women and peace and security agenda, and the assistance programmes in order to achieve concrete results.

3. Women play a crucial role in bolstering conflict prevention. In the short term they can lead efforts aimed at pre-emptive dialogue and act as early warning systems. In the long term, they can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the causes and solutions to a conflict, as well as promote actions aimed at solving it. The Network should pay attention and promote best practices related to this dimension of the women and peace and security agenda.

4. There is a need to understand that women are not only victims of conflicts, but also agents for peace.

5. Women and peace and security is a cross-cutting issue. Gender expertise is needed in all areas, including climate change, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes and development.

6. Some countries referred to the need to explore and promote the positive role that women can play in countering violent extremism, as well as increasing a deeper understanding of the drivers of this phenomenon and the participation of women in it.

7. Although the foreign affairs and international cooperation perspectives of this agenda are important, all countries should strive to develop and promote the agenda at the domestic level as well, by complying with the commitments and obligations internally.

8. Women and peace and security national action plans and strategies are one of the main tools available to improve the implementation of the agenda. The Network should dedicate efforts to spread and improve their use by Members States and regional organizations. It was suggested that one of the Network's annual meetings could focus on the specific subject of the implementation of national action plans.

9. United Nations-wide efforts are needed in order to successfully implement the women and peace and security agenda. Some countries mentioned the importance of working with the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations on peacekeeping-related issues like the appointment of gender advisors to the missions, as well as to stress the priority of the women and peace and security agenda in the budgetary discussions of the Fifth Committee.

10. Successful national, regional and international women and peace and security policies will need efficient monitoring and accountability mechanisms in order to measure the real impact of our efforts.

11. The Network, which provides a framework for a strong coalition on women and peace and security, has an important role to play in coordinating and improving national and regional efforts, as well as in identifying the main gaps in the implementation of the agenda.

12. Looking forward, Spain will organize the first yearly meeting of the Network in 2017. Germany offered to host the following meeting, in 2018.

Annex II to the letter dated 21 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Founding meeting of the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network

Joint communiqué

We, the Ministers and High-level Representatives of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Namibia, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay, as well as of the African Union, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, have come together in New York on 23 September 2016, to launch the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network in the recognition that national and regional efforts are vital for the full and effective implementation and coordination of the women and peace and security agenda.

As the founding members of the Network, we affirm our commitment to advance women's participation in decision-making in peace and security processes in order to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of all conflict prevention and resolution efforts, as well as women's participation in national-level peace and security policies and programmes.

We also affirm, as highlighted at the high-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) conducted in October 2015, that Member States and regional organizations remain the most influential actors in the implementation of all women and peace and security Security Council resolutions and, as such, have the primary responsibility for integrating women and peace and security commitments into domestic policies and normative frameworks.

As founding members, we encourage all Member States and regional organizations to appoint women and peace and security national focal points. A focal point is expected to exercise a leading role in women and peace and security efforts at the national or regional level and to maintain direct and ongoing contact with other focal points to streamline implementation of the agenda, exchange best practices and harmonize international efforts, including assistance programmes.

Recognizing that the fulfilment of these objectives currently requires a closer coordination among Member States and regional organizations, we created the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network as a cross-regional forum aiming at providing a space to periodically share and exchange lessons learned and best practices, including on how to develop and review high-impact national strategies to advance these objectives; on how to integrate gender analysis in all security assessments and prevention approaches; on how to strengthen

women's participation in the security sector, peace processes and mediation efforts; and on how to address conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.

This Network will be also an important tool for identifying and promoting partnerships with civil society and local organizations working on women and peace and security issues; for encouraging predictable and sustained funding for women and peace and security efforts; for promoting capacity-building at local, national and regional levels for a variety of actors working on women, peace and security; for promoting the development and implementation of high-impact national action plans on women and peace and security; and for aligning such national women and peace and security strategies with related strategies and policies, such as those aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism.

Recognizing that the Network's momentum and sustainability require Member State leadership and routine collaboration, focal points will meet biannually, once in a capital and once on the sidelines of the annual women and peace and security open debate of the Security Council. The first meeting of the Women and Peace and Security National Focal Points Network will be held in Spain in 2017, followed by another one at the margins of the 2017 annual women, peace and security open debate.

As States fully committed to advancing the women, peace and security agenda, we trust that the Focal Points Network will substantially contribute to translating words into effective results.